



NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

National Agricultural Statistics Service • United States Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 1659 • Richmond, Virginia 23218-1659 • Phone (804) 771-2493

Internet: nass-va@nass.usda.gov • World Wide Web: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/va>

Contact: Kevin Barnes, State Statistician

Number 5

Released: February 3, 2004

PRELIMINARY 2002 AGRICULTURAL CENSUS DATA RELEASED

(Richmond, Virginia, February 3, 2004) - The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has released data on the Nation's largest information gathering project for agriculture - the 2002 Census of Agriculture.

Preliminary 2002 Census of Agriculture statistics presented in the report describe number of farms and ranches by size and type for each State and the Nation. Selected demographic items portray the American farmers and ranchers who are the source of U.S. agricultural production. Demographic data include gender of operator, age group categories, race, years on present farm, days worked off farm, number of persons living in farm households, and number of households deriving income from this farm or ranch. Data are presented as preliminary because the comprehensive census review of all items to the county level is continuing. These data are therefore subject of some limited change when final census results are released. The expected date for the release of the complete report is June 3, 2004.

New on the 2002 Census of Agriculture are information on: operator characteristics on multiple (up to 3) operators per farm; production contracts/landlord shares; computer and Internet use; more detailed farm-related income; and new commodities (bison, elk, llamas, deer, emus, and ostriches).

HIGHLIGHTS OF VIRGINIA'S 2002 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE DATA

The number of farms in Virginia totaled 47,615. This compares with 49,366 farms reported on the 1997 Agricultural Census. There were 8.7 million acres of land in farms reported in 2002 which is down 1 percent from the 1997 report. The average size of farms in Virginia was 182 acres compared to 177 acres in 1997.

The average age of the principal operator in 2002 was 56.7. In 1997 the average age of the principal operator was 55.8.

The number of minority farm operators are as follows: 18,963 Women operators, 1,981 Black operators, 195 American Indian or Alaska Native operators, 104 Asian operators, and 16 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander operators.

For a complete copy of the 2002 Preliminary Agricultural Census Report, visit the NASS web site at www.usda.gov/nass/.

###

Find agricultural statistics for your county, State, and the Nation at www.usda.gov/nass/

Cooperating with Virginia Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services